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AUTHOR Hennessy, Peter
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ABSTRACT

An assessment of current practices in citizenship education in Canada is followed by a proposal for decentralization of educational control and community involvement for students at all levels. In response to research which indicated that Canadian students were virtually ignorant of their government and its political issues and to the demand for teacher accountability, Canadian education is currently entering an era of intense centralization. The Ministery of Education in Ontario has mandated curriculum project management teams; regional curriculum councils; provincial review of staff evaluation, development, and assignment; and standardized testing of students. This centralizing and standardizing of education will most likely be counterproductive to citizenship education. Thus, those involved in education should work toward process and structural changes rather than curriculum change. For example, even during the early education years, the school could serve as an information and resource center, while the community would be a laboratory in which human and natural phenomena could be observed. Community involvement would decentralize the educational system and give teachers, students, and parents real power in educational policy, while engendering citizenship qualities. (KC)

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Forging Citizenship Values for the Post-Industrial Era

by

Peter Hennessy, Faculty of Education
Queen's University, Kingston,

April 22, 1983

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Forging Citizenship Values For the Post-Industrial Era

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A review of citizenship education in North America leads to the belief that the central and controlling reason for founding public schools in the U.S.A. and Canada was to foster national unity and patriotism. The public schools of the early American republic were seen as critically important in binding the nation together after the expulsion of the English in 1783. The teachers were expected, in those early days, to teach literacy and inculcate patriotic and moral virtues (Butts). The New England Primer had for generations before the revolution used rhyming couplets to assist in teaching the alphabet. After the Revolutionary War and the establishment of an independent country, the couplet for "W" was changed from "Whales in the sea, God's voice obey" to "Great Washington brave, His country did save." George Washington was described in a 1797 textbook as "the most unexceptionally, the most finished, the most God-like human character that ever acted a part on the theatre of the world."

National pride was also the dubious moral foundation for the immense effort to turn the resources of North America into personal wealth, utilising the principles of laissez faire economics. In the introduction to his History of the United States in 10 volumes, George Bancroft made the case in 1834 for large scale mechanisation and production. Before the colonists came to America he wrote "Its only inhabitants were a few scattered tribes of feeble barbarians, destitute of commerce and of political connection. The axe and the ploughshare were unknown. The soil, which had been gathering fertility from the repose of centuries, was lavishing its strength in magnificent but useless vegetation. In the view of civi-

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lization the immense domain was a solitude." The Bancroft view, indeed the American view, was that resources existed to be exploited for the comfort and glory of man. (The new morality, as expressed by people like Jacques Cousteau, is that the bounty of nature must be protected for the enjoyment and use of all living things. The whale has a place in the order of things equally as important as man).

Increasing social diversity, when combined with partisan politics in the American Republic of the mid-19th century, drove education leaders and teachers to sanitise civic instruction in the schools. Objectivity, neutrality and detachment from dirty politics became the watchwords while, at the same time, all the stops were pulled out in promoting patriotic fervour. By 1900, when the forces of manifest destiny climaxed in the form of American Imperialism under Teddy Roosevelt, the maxim "my country, right or wrong" had become the moral reference point of civics instruction in the schools. Some of the accompanying activities were daily pledges of allegiance, loyalty oaths, flag ceremonies and marching songs. It took the blood-letting of World War I and the economic misery of the Great Depression to replace American jingoism with a reformed social studies which emphasized some of the problems of the free enterprise system and the need for collective action on behalf of the downtrodden. Civic education as little more than nationalist indoctrination lost credibility during this period and has not yet found new ground. A major effort to re-define citizenship education began in the 1970s and is now beginning to bear fruit.

Canadian civic education parallelled that of the U.S.A. but with different emphases. Before and after Confederation in 1867, public schools in English Canada under leaders like Egerton Ryerson were put to the task of repelling American republicanism and instilling loyalty to the Empire

of Britain. Meanwhile, the church schools of French Canada were teaching their young the glories of Catholicism and the French heritage. The two solitudes of Canada have never been more evident than in the different civic purposes of their schools.

The right to vote for all men and free, compulsory public education happened soon after 1867 in English Canada. Consequently, the notion that reading and writing skills were essential citizenship skills took hold at an early stage. W. Stewart Wallace wrote a Reader in Canadian Civics in 1935. In it he stated confidently, "A voter who cannot read and write is under a severe handicap." The intervening 50 years of liberal democracy in Canada have not yet made it clear that minimum literacy is a boon to good government. (That, of course, is not an implied argument for illiteracy).

Wallace wrote his little textbook, which sold for .28¢, just as the sun was setting on civics as the vehicle for training patriots. At the beginning of the chapter on Canada, Wallace happily quoted Lord Rosebery as follows, "The British Empire is the greatest secular agency for good now known to mankind." In concluding the text, Wallace wrote, "It is the duty and glory of every Canadian to take a natural pride in his country and to defend it against foreign aggression with his last breath." To get to those challenging sentiments in the book, the young reader would have had to plod through chapters on municipal services, government structure and voting procedures. Here is a sentence randomly picked from the section on elections.

> "The constituency in which voting takes place is divided into what are known as polling sub-divisions and in each of these is opened what is called a polling booth. This is a room either in a private house or a store or in a public building such as a schoolhouse, which is specially set apart for the occasion. Over each polling booth there presides a deputy returning

> officer assisted by a poll clerk. The deputy returning officer represents the returning officer for the whole constituency and it is his dut to see all votes are properly recorded."

This kind of trivial detail on government has, alas, been the staple diet of civics instruction. The students were given definitions of democracy and descriptions of political parties, election procedures, councils, legislatures, parliaments, bills and courts. Sometimes they were bussed to city hall or to the capital to meet politicians who told them how wonderful it was to be engaged in public service. Then the students would be tested and graded for their understanding of democracy.

It is worth noting that studies like those of Robert E. Cleary of students who have taken such courses in school have shown them to be often more dogmatic, less tolerant and less democratic than students who did not have the "benefit" of such courses. Judith Torney and her colleagues conducted a huge international study in the early seventies of citizenship education in ten liberal democratic countries (including the U.S.A. but not Canada). She found that a stress on patriotism and nationalism as a basis for active participation in government may indeed lead to more such participation but at the expense of democratic values. A democratic value of great importance is an appreciation and acceptance of persons of other racial and cultural backgrounds as equals. One of the 10 countries in the Torney study was Israel where there is a strong emphasis on nationalism and patriotism in the schools. It seems, in the light of recent Israeli military actions, that the citizen army of that country now has an undue influence on public policy and that this influence is contrary to the democratic principles on which the nation was founded.

The Torney study produced a mass of data about the cognitive achieve-

ment of students in areas of citizenship education ranging from concepts such as democracy to details of institutions and processes of a political and economic nature. The study found that knowledge and understanding varied negatively with patriotic rituals practised in class or school, a stress on facts in a civics course, the use of standardised tests in civics training and the use of lectures in the classroom. There were, at the same time, - and this is the good news, positive correlations between knowledge and understanding of citizenship and encouragement of independent opinions in class, the number of hours spent in pleasure reading, the extent of participation in political discussion with parents, friends and teachers, and, not least, the extent of participation in civic activities.

Torney learned that 38 percent of civics students in the U.S.A. agreed to some degree with their teachers' political opinions and another 38 percent did not know what their teachers' political opinions were! Teachers, even teachers of civics, think it is wise to be neutral or bland for the sake of being "objective". Back in the days of McCarthyism and loyalty oaths for teachers it was indeed smart to be neutral. But one would think that educators might have learned something from the McCarthy wave that nearly inundated U.S. democracy. They might have learned that teachers should practise democratic values: should speak freely about their social concerns and their political beliefs, should provide opportunities for students to do the same, should participate in community and national efforts to enhance equal opportunities and reduce intolerance and injustice whether it be legal or economic in nature, should encourage and allow students to do the same, should know what civic and human rights are all about and how to exercise them, should make sure their students know too. It is neutrality in stating and exercising democratic values that

hinders growing youth from becoming socially useful.

There are and have been for many years teachers in North America who know clearly the practical meaning of civic education and who have done good work, often quietly and indirectly. Donald W. Robinson wrote a treatise for the National Council for the Social Studies in 1967 in which he described in some detail school practices and projects all across the United States which followed the highest ideals of civic education. He wrote of Arizona students who lived for a time each year on Indian reservations in the southwest, of Detroit students who volunteered their summers to work for community agencies, of programs in which older students were paired with younger students who needed remedial attention beyond the resources of the professional staff, of the Flint Community Schools which for a time were a model for bringing adults and children together in the same learning environment. In summing up the account, Robinson made the potent point that civic education is not a course nor a unit but a focus of concern that pervades every aspect of school life.

Though the bloom is long gone from the sixties rose and we have muddled through the sour seventies into the tension-ridden eighties, there are still citizenship educators doing outstanding work. But the urgency of the task is fast out-stripping the modest achievements of the schools. Wayne H. Martin reported in the journal, Educational Leadership, in October 1980 that from 1969 to 1976 there was a 21.1 percent decline in performance among seventeen year olds when asked if they felt they had any influence on local government and to provide an example of exercising that influence. Martin was encouraged, at the same time, by the improvement in the ability of seventeen year olds to describe ways to avoid wars.

In Canada, the A. B. Hodgetts' report (1968) of civic education, What Culture? What Heritage?, revealed that the vast majority of Canadian

high school seniors were almost totally ignorant of their government and looming public issues such as French Canadian Separatism. Hodgetts spelled out his alarm this way:

> "Our young people cannot build a better world or a better Canada until the quality of their civic education is vastly improved. They are heading into a future over which hangs the constant threat of a third and thermonuclear world war; into a world in which poverty, ignorance and disease are rampant and the need to understand and share is urgent; into a future that is fraught with violence and the abuse of human dignity. Closer to home, they are entering a society that does not yet possess the capacity to understand its position or maintain it with balance and clarity; a society that is dangerously divided and cannot play a full part in the community of nations until those internal divisions are resolved."

Hodgetts argued that in their preference for viewing through rose-tinted spectacles (in the style of W. Stewart Wallace and most other textbook writers) Canadian educators had been systematically ignoring problems of race, language, culture and social justice. Because of the failure of the schools to provide students with a meaningful sense of Canadian identity, the country was in danger of being absorbed into the U.S.A. Of the great volume of data collected by the Hodgetts study, the following items are noteworthy:

1. Of 850 teachers observed, only 7% were teaching by sound inquiry principles.
2. In 24% of the classes, they found keen and interested students. In 76% of classes, they found ritualistic or apathetic behaviour.
3. 39% of the teachers were warm, confident, and somewhat or very knowledgeable. 50% of the teachers were custodians, managers, maintainers.
4. The majority of secondary school students did not find any source of pride, respect or interest in Canadian history or social studies.
5. The major source of pride for English Canadian students was Canada's part in the War of 1812, World War I and World War II. By contrast, the main source of pride for 75% of French Canadian students was in their forefathers who fought to keep their language and religion.

How much blame can fairly be assigned to the schools themselves for these conditions is a matter for endless speculation. What is certain is that the public schools are mirror images of society. When the general citizenry loses faith in their government as happened in a pronounced way in the United States after Watergate and the debacle in Vietnam, that loss of faith is felt by their offspring. Equally, a rise in public morale infuses the schools and the young who attend them. Many Canadians were buoyed up in the early eighties by the repatriation from England of their constitution, complete with a charter of human rights. But, as Hodgetts warned in 1968, there were very few Canadians able or willing to evaluate the constitutional issues surrounding the repatriation.

Partly as a result of the Hodgetts study, there has been since 1970 a steady increase in Canadian studies in the schools. The Canada Studies Foundation completed a questionnaire survey in 1982 of nearly 11,000 grades 7 and 10 students across Canada. They found an improvement in knowledge levels about Canada and also quite positive attitudes about this multicultural country of ours. But we are still a long way from the Hodgetts' dream of a nation of informed and reasonable patriots. For example, the C.S.F. study revealed that the average grade 7 students scored 25 out of 60 on the knowledge subscale while the average grade 10 students averaged 33 out of 60. The authors of the study, considering the difficulty and variety of the questions, were quite pleased with the results.

Here in Ontario, the blow for an enlightened Canadianism was struck in the Intermediate Division (Gr. 7 - 10) where all pupils since 1977 must take two courses in Canadian History, The Story of Canada and Canadians and Contemporary Canadian and World Concerns, plus a course in Canadian

Geography. Some 20% of them also take the optional course, Canada's Multicultural Heritage. The history courses are presented by means of themes or units such as Rebellions, Life in Upper Canada, Confederation, the U.E.L. and the American Revolution and so on. The guidelines from the Ministry of Toronto specify the objectives and the core content for each course. It is evident from the guidelines that the grade 10 course, Contemporary Canadian and World Concerns, is in the dubious tradition of old style civics. The pupils are called upon to know the Canadian political and legal system, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, some current issue such as English-French relations and the importance of the arts in Canadian society. On the surface of things, not much has changed since the days of W. Stewart Wallace except that the Mountie has been displaced by the Group of Seven in the pantheon of Canadian heroes.

Beneath the surface, much more is happening, some of it quite contradictory in nature. The teachers have been asked by the Ontario Ministry of Education to ensure that the pupils learn how to investigate issues, how to analyse and synthesise, how to report intelligently to their peers, how to balance rights and responsibilities, how to evaluate their own progress, how to enhance their self esteem. In short, the pupils are supposed to learn a lot, congnitively and affectively and physically, about citizenship values and skills. But when one reads from the Ministry guidelines the so-called "strategies" in the Government and Law section of Contemporary Canadian and World Concerns, one finds that the strategies are all quite traditional and classroom bound. The strategies call upon the pupils to use texts, documents, maps, debates, role playing and films. These are all useful ways of learning but they tend to exclude the realities of the community and the neighbourhood. Under the control requirements of a classroom, not much can be done to realise the broader knowledge and personal development objectives listed above.

That is one contradiction. Another comes from the political pressure for accountability which has set in train a steady drift to centralization in education. When I was a young teacher in Ontario it seemed for a time as if the schools were going to be given back to the local boards, parents and teachers. Province-wide exams were abandoned despite the moans of the university people (and the sounds can still be heard in the corridors of academe); the provincial inspectorate was abolished and their black books were incinerated; purportedly to enhance local control, county boards of education replaced the township and small town boards; teachers were invited to develop local curricula based on general guidelines from the government; and high school students were given a lot of choice of what to study. It was a heady time -- for a short time. Then came the "baddies" and the "bogeys": waste, permissiveness, moral rot, indiscipline, chronic deficits, runaway inflation and functional illiterates. The response was predictable. The centralizers seized control and a new conventional wisdom was spelled out. The Ontario Secondary Education Review Project (1981) seemed to voice the worries of the whole continent. There must be more compulsory subjects of the "basic" variety; standard tests; periodic performance reviews of the school boards and the teachers; policies to combat vandalism, drug abuse and alcoholism; codes of student behavior; less free time for students; standardized transcripts for recording student progress; and, in general, a whole lot more "structure".

The Ministry of Education embraced the SERP recommendations with alacrity. The policy statement of November 1982 would chill to the bone anyone of the persuasion that autonomy for schools and teachers is essential for cultivating autonomous citizens. Here is a short selection from the R.O.S.E. report (Renewal of Secondary Education in Ontario) of ways in which Toronto will be imposing its political will on the schools during

the eighties:

(1) "Curriculum project meanagement teams will create an awareness and understanding by trustees, teachers and faculties of education of the changes in beliefs, approaches and materials incorporated in the new policy and will monitor the implementation".

(2) "... key provincial priorities will need to be identified and communicated through the Regional Curriculum Councils".

(3) Provincial reviews (1982-84) will be conducted of
- -alternative, summer and night school programs
- -staff evaluation processes
- -staff development programs to determine their adequacy
- -staff assignment practices of boards to determine whether teachers are adequately qualified

(4) Objective testing will be done to evaluate provincial standards and adequacy of curricula. Ontario Instrument Assessment Pool testing materials will be used for the purpose.

One needs only to take these statements at their face value to recognize that we are moving into an era of intense centralization. R. Shadbolt, the Director of the Frontenac Board of Education recently complained publicly about the extent of central control in Ontario.

The danger in monitoring curriculum and instruction by means of standardised tests is that the tests set the teaching norm. A glance at the test items of the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool in Intermediate History gives no reassurance or comfort. Consider these questions (written for basic/vocational students):

> Which one of the following is supposed to be a major task of the Canadian Senate?
>
> a. representing Canada at official functions abroad
> b. representing the monarchy in Canada
> c. preventing impulsive or unwise legislation
> d. supplying members for the Cabinet.

The "correct" answer is C. But at the present time, d is the best answer, given the Liberal party's lack of Commons seats in the West. Whichever is the best answer does not matter. What matters is that teaching to

that sort of question would undermine learning to a disastrous extent. The test items, remember, were formulated for basic and vocational students. Can anyone seriously believe that young persons, shunted by the system into basic/vocational training, will respond to the political abstractions which abound in such questions? Here is another:

> All but one of the following refer to executive powers of government. Select the exception.
>
> a. administering government services
> b. directing the daily affairs of government
> c. carrying out the laws of government
> d. sentencing people who break the laws.

It is probable that a number of the students would not know the meaning of the word "exception". They would be thrown into total reliance on guessing. Most of the rest would have to guess because of the legal technicalities of the choices. What has this to do with learning to live in a democracy? Consider this one:

> The word "suffrage" means
>
> a. The art of tolerating something
> b. The right to be elected
> c. The right to vote
> d. To suffer for a cause.

This is one of several trick questions in the set. A trick question is one which leads the respondent to the wrong answer. Such a question encourages students to believe that learning is a game of chance and that our political system is a structure of tricky vocabulary and fixed features rather than a changing and imperfect response to human needs. Ninety-one of the 120 test items in the Government and Law set were multiple choice in nature and therefore tending to be counter-productive as a way to induct young people into the political process. The Carleton Board of Education in the spring of 1983 was calling for contract research proposals to develop test items for Intermediate History that would indeed reflect the declared emphasis of the guidelines on concepts and skill development rather than simple content.

Why are politicians and educational leaders so casual and cavalier about imposing the weight of government standards and regulations on the heads of children? Do they not understand, as certainly the education leaders should, if not the politicians, that such action leads to more anxiety, confusion and frustration and to less intrinsic motivation to learn? Do they actually believe that standardized testing is a stimulus to worthwhile learning? There is a vicious circle built into standardized testing, - the more it is used, the more teachers and students will numbly and dumbly settle for the mediocrity of the norm leading to calls for "better" tests and higher norms and so on around again. When will our political custodians of the public schools, whether they be in legislatures or local boards of education, learn that educational standards cannot be legislated any more than morality can? When folks are permitted to experience immorality, so long as they are subject to penalty for doing measurable damage, then, for reasons of self-preservation, they tend to become moral. Equally, when teachers and students, within general public guidelines, are permitted to decide what matters are important for their attention and what problems and methods are appropriate to their abilities, then they tend to learn a lot. They become excited about education. They demonstrate that education is a matter of personal growth without any fixed destination. It is a journey with a bright glow beyond.

It is difficult to see how our society can make it into the post-industrial era by watching fixedly into the rear view mirror. In that mirror, there are familiar and occasionally reassuring images: the disciplined work schedule, the elaborate technology of mass production, the staggering consumption of raw materials, the decline of renewable resources at alarming rates, the replacement of communities by sanitized and depersonalized housing complexes dependent on the automobile for commuting to work

and for travel to the shopping center, the levelling of intellectual activity to the standard of commercial television and sensational journalism, the drugs - crime - more jails merry-go-round, the impending bankruptcy of governments unable to control their deficits or solve the social problems, the lengthening lines of unemployed, the drift to totalitarian thought and behavior as demonstrated by the burgeoning fundamentalists in religion, the anger on peoples' faces even as they say "Have a nice day!". These are some of the rear view mirror images which are impelling persons of independent mind to look through the front window in search of promising detours and byways. The exciting new projects and ideas coming out of the heads of futurists, energy conservationists, brain scientists, naturalists, architects of community, and intermediate technology craftsmen should be more readily accessible to teachers and students. That is to say, young learners should be in the very middle of all this flux and not cooped up in schools memorizing bits of information to be disgorged on the next multiple choice extravaganza.

Some suggestions for the future

The foregoing review can be summarised by stating that centralizing (i.e. standardizing) education is likely to be counter-productive in preparing citizens for the emerging world around us. Second, the underlying assumption of this paper is that citizenship education is moral education. This casts aside the historic notion that young people can be adequately prepared for serving their community and world by teaching them about government and governmental processes. The new morality ordains civic duty as life-saving and life-enhancing in the broadest possible sense. The lives to be saved and enhanced include millions of humans around the globe who are under-nourished and severely disadvantaged, animal species

both wild and domesticated which are endangered or inhumanely managed, and plant life ravaged by exploitive economic practices. This new citizenship can only be defined and realized within an ambience of free inquiry and turbulent creativity simply because there is so much to be un-learned and learned. This leads to the claim that structural and process change in the schools is more needed than curriculum change. In other words, the hidden curriculum is the place to look for real advances in citizenship education, the hidden curriculum being that rather vague set of actions, attitudes and influences that surround the formal subject content and the formal teaching and evaluation activities within the classrooms. The personality of the principal, the emotional climate of the school, the relationships with parents and the community, the extra-curricular emphasis whether it be on winning trophies or learning cooperative life skills, the balance between order and freedom, the value placed on conformity versus individuality, the worth of persons in relation to the worth of programs, - these are features of the hidden curriculum of a school.

An interesting example of major structural and process change took place in the mid-seventies in Rockville Centre on Long Island, New York. The school district decided to set up a small alternative high school called Greenhouse, for about 50 "disaffected" students, grades 10-12, who wanted out of the regular senior high school but did not wish to be drop-outs. Once admitted to Greenhouse, they were expected to develop a plan of action that would put them in a community setting for 20 to 30 hours a week. The list of cooperating agencies included museums, restaurants, hospitals, television stations, schools, social service agencies and a variety of other small businesses. In addition to learning about procedures and techniques of the community situation, the students learned how to analyze

and describe, in their weekly reports to their teachers, what they were doing. They also had to meet academic requirements by attending classes in basic subjects including physical education. According to independent assessments completed in 1980, 80 percent of the seniors showed mastery of basic writing skills, 100 percent of them showed mastery of basic oral communication skills, all of the Greenhouse students reported higher career planning skills than their regular school counterparts and they all revealed more positive attitudes to education. The graduates moved on to post secondary education or career training. The Program Coordinator of Greenhouse reported that "All of these young people have been part of a small revolution in student learning - they have gained high school credit and the invaluable experience of self-directed action learning".

One wonders why the Greenhouse idea cannot be extended to all high school students. Why do students have to be "disaffected" or "unmotivated" or "disadvantaged" or "vocationally oriented" or problem cases of some kind, in order to experience educational rites of passage in company with the rest of society? Why are such schools as Greenhouse still droplets in an ocean of bureaucratic uniformity? The questions are rhetorical because the answers are well known, but worth repeating. Education has become a big business characterized by ledger book principles and methods. Education is in the control of big interests who want employees who conform readily, who can be "shaped up", and who can read and spell and calculate. Education is in the control of big unions who want to be able to put into the contract every teacher's workday in standard terms. Education is in the control of parents who want their children in a safe place all day while they go out and earn money to pay the mortgage. Education is in the control of politicians who want the pupils to behave and learn from books the way they did. Up against those odds, it is surprising there

are any Greenhouse schools at all. But the encouraging fact is that there is an increasing number of these spin-offs or splinters.

There are lots of ways to bring about structural and process changes so that school can be organically linked to the community. The Laurier La Pierre report of 1980 commissioned by the Ontario elementary teacher associations and entitled To Herald A Child, proposed that publicly supported Day Care Centers, Nursery Schools, Kindergartens and Primary Schools (to grade three) be replaced by Centers For The Family And The Education Of The Young. The Centers would be able to look after the needs of the young from conception to eight years. They would offer after-school programs for children older than eight and, not least, they would function as a community service for parents and all who care for children both before and after birth. They would be located in church halls, former elementary schools or refurbished large houses and in all cases, if possible, within walking distance of the families they serve.

A less drastic departure from established practice would be that of incorporating community based learning into the existing school structure and curriculum. Fred Newmann's view that students must learn how to be environmentally competent in order to be effective citizens comes back to mind. Building on an assortment of experiments and special programs that are already documented, a school system might decide, in a fairly quiet way, that all students and teachers in every division and department from grades two to 12 would spend a minimum amount of learning time off the school property. The off-campus pattern might be wedge shaped, from two hours weekly for grade two youngsters to 12 hours weekly to grade 12. Needless to say, such a decision could only be implemented after lengthy communication and careful planning with parents, public security bodies,

private businesses and a set of concerned social agencies and public institutions.

The teachers would have to apply their most sophisticated thought to the question of how to use the in-school hours to greatest effect. It would be a naive misinterpretation of the whole idea of teaching for environmental competence to say, for instance, that occupational studies, social studies and nature studies should be community based while language and other arts together with computation skills should be school based. Such a notion would have the disastrous effect of splitting the curriculum into a "social" part and an "academic" part, with the latter enjoying false respect and unearned prominence. The community part would be vulnerable to attack before it got through the trial stage.

The teachers and their advisors, one hopes, would embrace the idea that the school is an information bank, a resource center, a quiet place for reflecting and writing about the community which, for its part, is the laboratory where human activities and natural phenomena are observed and experienced. Students would bring back to the school the observations, concerns, and problems that call for interpretation, discussion, measurement, computation and literacy expression. They would bring back practical reasons for acquiring language and other skills and the development of their artistic talents. The school would be nothing more nor less than a well staffed and equipped place in which young people try to analyze, synthesize and evaluate stimulating details of the community of which they are <u>currently</u> active and productive citizens.

An undertaking to move schooling into the community would cure several of the sicknesses of public education. The grading system would finally be exposed for what it is: a sorting mechanism that conveniences teachers and school officials (both school and university) and damages

students, with the possible exception of the top ten percent. It is a mechanism that depends heavily on regimented classes and dispensing "objective" information to them. It has been described as sticking bits of information onto skulls long enough for the next test to be completed, - a bankrupt exercise in any worthwhile program of developing active citizens. Interested persons should go to such authors as William Glasser, Howard Kirschenbaum, Carl Rogers and John Goodlad for full discussions of the grading dilemma.

The two solitudes, community over there and school over here, each with its own set of prejudices and wrong presumptions about the other, would be replaced by a harmony of effort (sometimes cacophonous) to initiate the young into a world that craves new initiatives. This is the basis for the Laurier LaPierre proposal for Family Centers for the education of the young child and for my belief that all schooling take place partly in the community. The present situation is gravely serious. Zealous minorities are trying to get control of schools in order to burn books, stop sex education, teach energy conservation, bring about sexual equality, etc., etc. Cost conscious citizens are shooting from the hip at libraries, field trips, psychological services, inter-school sports, music and art, counselling and almost anybody who is foolish enough to lift his head up over the school wall. Teachers are sinking into the pit of unionism and the siege mentality that goes with it. School officials use double talk and circumlocutions rather than straight talk.

Finally, community based schooling would be a powerful impetus to decentralize the school system. Indeed, it would likely force the issue. The current push to centralize curriculum, school management, teacher training and certification, - the works, will soon run its course. That is a casually optimistic statement which belies the profoundly serious

nature of this problem. An era of high tech communication and information storage can facilitate and encourage centralized management systems, especially during a period of chronic economic difficulties. Alvin Toffler in The Third Wave contends, however, that the appearance of cheap computers in every office and many homes portends the break-up of large monolithic governments and corporations into small units united to community interests and needs. Large concentrations of people in the central office or plant will be replaced by local units joined by electronic information networks which will ensure efficiency and economy of scale. Toffler believes that the era of national representative governments filled with bemused bureaucrats and parliamentarians trying to interpret the swirl of change, is coming to an end. Indeed, he asserts that the parliamentary system is obsolete along with the centralized school system, the standardized health care system, and the mega-corporation still dependent on mass production and the power of advertising.

The unfolding of the Toffler vision will be accompanied by a set of social and economic stresses that may cause a landslide into totalitarianism. Avoiding such gloomy speculation, let me present a scenario for decentralizing education that might of itself bring about a re-birth of democratic values and practices.

My favourite reference in this matter is Frank MacKinnon, a Prince Edward Islander, who wrote a book on the subject of decentralizing education entitled The Politics of Education (1960). MacKinnon based his case for complete decentralization of education to the school community on his abhorrence of decision-making in education for the purpose of winning votes ("Back to the basics!" "More discipline in the school!" "If it's for the benefit of the kiddies, I'm for it!" etc.). He understood that the steady accretions of central power over the schools over the past 150

years have been for such purposes as efficient management, enforcement of advanced techniques of instruction, introduction of new subjects related to manpower needs in an industrial setting, achievement of greater economy in the system and equalization of school quality. MacKinnon also understood, and this is the key point, that centralizing education has not released the imagination, initiative and ingenuity of teachers and students, and never will. This is not to say that there are no teachers and students with these qualities. It is to say that they are exceptional. The typical teacher in a centralized system is textbook bound and union contract-minded and the typical student is bored.

Once the notion gets around that there is no alternative to drastic decentralization, the movement will begin, at first experimentally and on a limited scope. The LaPierre concept of Family Centers for children up to eight or nine years of age could quite easily be instituted in some inner city settings where there is plenty of available space and a fairly high proportion of citizens who still place a high premium on family values and the idea of family unity. The involvement of local employers in the planning and conduct of the Centers so that working parents could have scheduled time off seems feasible and promising. Tax policies might be written which would minimize financial losses to cooperating employers.

Local control of the education of older school students, right up to graduation, in order to implement the community education idea discussed above, could be started by granting a high school and its set of feeder schools virtually complete self government. The governing board of the school would be made up, half and half, of trustees appointed by the municipality and teachers elected by their colleagues. Appointed trustees, responsible to the elected city council, would be better than elected trustees for several reasons. They would not so likely be entrapped by

the need for slogans and cliches to explain what they are doing. They would be chosen for their maturity of view on social and educational issues. They would be less likely to be political careerists. Their line of responsibility to the council would ensure that they would be watchdogs of the budget.

Giving teachers half the seats on the governing board would deliver the death blow to the historical idea of the pedagogue as servant. That obsolete view continues to hobble and be-devil education. As argued earlier, one of the worst of its consequences is the neutral teacher, without announced views on anything controversial and fearful of venturing beyond his specialty or classroom frame of reference. Also, teachers and trustees constituting the governing board would work out terms and conditions of teacher employment without the deficiencies of collective bargaining. Presumably, teacher salaries and benefits would continue to be fixed by some form of collective bargaining during the transition to full and general decentralization. Once the latter stage was reached, bargaining would be obsolete and impractical; salaries and benefits of teachers would have to be determined by a state or provincial tribunal acting independently of the central treasury but according to terms of reference approved by the legislature and drawn according to principles of salary comparability with the private sector.

The governing board of the local school cluster would be advised by committees, chaired by its own members, but made up chiefly of parents, teachers, students and other interested citizens. The financing of the schools would be essentially as it is done now. The governing board would determine a budget and submit it to the municipal council for approval and tax collection. Central grants would continue to be based on enrollment and other factors and would be determined in their size by the

legislature in the usual political way.

There is no claim in the foregoing paragraphs to be prescriptive in a detailed way. The purpose is to illustrate two points: one, that the school system will not fall into chaos if teachers, students and parents are given real power in education policy and practice; two, that the excitement of learning how to be a good citizen, cannot be engendered by centralized bureaucracies. Citizenship grows while listening to heart beats and watching blossoms open in the spring.

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